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**Patent Claims**

1. A method for controlling a device for the distribution of audio, video, data or control signals, with the device having at least one switching matrix, which has a number of inputs and a number of outputs as well as a corresponding number of coupling points for production of links between the inputs and outputs, with the method comprising the following steps:
- 5 (a) selection of coupling points which are required for a signal path between an input and an output;
- (b) connection of the coupling points selected in step (a) in order to produce the signal path; and
- 10 (c) locking of the coupling points in the connected state in step (b).
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2. The method as claimed in claim 1, **wherein** the coupling points are successively locked in the signal flow direction.
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3. The method as claimed in claim 1, **wherein** the coupling points are locked in the opposite direction to the signal flow direction.
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4. The method as claimed in claim 2 or 3, **wherein** the coupling points are unlocked in the signal flow direction.
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5. The method as claimed in claim 2 or 3, **wherein** the coupling points are successively unlocked in the opposite direction to the signal flow direction.
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6. The method as claimed in claim 1, **wherein** two or more signal paths are combined to form a signal bundle, and are jointly locked.
7. The method as claimed in claim 6, **wherein** the process of joining two or more signal paths together to

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form a path bundle is carried out by the entry of input or outputs for the respective signal paths in a list.

8. The method as claimed in claim 7, **wherein** the  
5 locking of the path bundle is carried out by locking the process of joining the path bundle together as well as by the locking of all signal paths which have been joined together to form the path bundle.

10 9. The method as claimed in claim 7, **wherein** the path bundle is cancelled by deletion of all the inputs and outputs from the list.

15 10. The method as claimed in claim 6, **wherein** locked signal paths which have been joined together to form a locked path bundle cannot be unlocked.

20 11. The method as claimed in claim 10, **wherein** the attempt to unlock a locked signal path which is part of a path bundle initiates the indication of a warning message.

25 12. A storage medium in which a program code is stored which can be stored in the program memory of a data processing system and causes a program to be run which carries out the method steps as claimed in claim 1.